

CLERK: LB 64. Read title. There are no committee amendments, Mr, President.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, it has been a good while since this bill has been before us so I am going to explain the bill and give a few observations on the death penalty and why I think it ought to be abolished and I hope, I hope you are listening, that everyone of us that has an opinion on this bill state our opinion, whatever it happens to be, so that the record will speak most eloquently in our own words as to our reasons and motivations for doing what we do or failing to take action which I, personally, feel is appropriate. Right now there is a death penalty in Nebraska and I think it ought not to be. We are not dealing with a theory this morning. There are four men under the sentence of death, three whose death warrants have been signed by the Supreme Court. One is due to be executed the 27th of June, the second, two days later, the 29th of June, the third one, two days later, the 1st of July. This, in itself, shows the grotesqueness, the grimness, the hideousness of the state deliberately taking the life of its citizens. I have been talking to the Warden and to the Director of Corrections. I have spent a good time at the penitentiary, a good amount of time a couple of days ago, and we went to examine the electric chair, the generator and see what preparations are being made to carry out this state killing. In order to find the electric chair, you have to go through a lot of twistings and turnings downstairs into the basement, around into a very small room where the chair is hidden behind coats and other garments. Next to the chair over in the corner is the generator. There is a big cord that does run from the back of the chair. There is a place to strap the people's arms, their legs into the chair and naturally the electrode that fits on their head. But nothing is being done at the penitentiary to refurbish the electric chair. It has not been fastened to the floor which will be necessary. They have not tested the generator. They are not certain that all the wires are in working order, and for your information, the Warden and the Director of Corrections hope that they will not have to use that electric chair and it is up to us as members of the Legislature to see that such a barbarism is not committed in this state in the name of the people. I have been handing out to you documents, cases of innocent people who have been executed. I have given you information to show you what has been hidden, what happens when an execution occurs. The U. S. Supreme Court in 1972 officially declared that there is no instantaneous and painless way to extinguish the life of a person by means of execution. In the case of shooting, it took Gilmore two minutes to die after he had four bullets placed through his heart. Remember we are not talking about a barbaric totalitarian country like Russia. We are not talking about Nazi Germany. We are talking about Christian democratic America in 1977, not in medieval days when they would execute animals. They had the capital punishment sentence for animals. The hangers and floggers have been pushed to ridiculous lengths throughout history. Now I want to give you an example. This is called Reflections on the Hanging of a Pig and it describes an engraving entitled Infliction of the Death Penalty on a Sow. The sow dressed in human